

April 25, 1969

Dr. Harvey M. Sapolsky  
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Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Dear Dr. Sapolsky:

Thank you for your letter of April 22.

I have to accept your criticism, and would admit that I would have dealt more comprehensively with your thesis were there space. My interpretation of the "votes" is admittedly almost entirely intuitive, and based on discussions I have heard around Stanford. However (to respond to your own thesis), there are also few issues that elicit technical unanimity, and I am not sure that fluoridation is typical of political decision-making. Why not research the very point, whether votes reflect private anxieties or public-regarding attitudes in this particular arena. Many of my undecided friends point to the availability of fluoride by other routes as an important argument, and you will not dispute that the general issue of individual choice has been invoked in the debates. However, there is no substitute for collecting concrete information about public attitudes. I may be too deeply influenced by the expressions of anti-fluoridation leaders, such as you quote.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics

SAPOLSKY